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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Programme period	Resources	$
1993-1996	Net IPF	3 873 000
	Estimated cost-sharing	-
	Total	3 873 000

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I. DEVELOPMENT SITUATION, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A. Current socio-economic situation

1. The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, an island country of 1,001 square kilometres, with an estimated population of 120,500, belongs to the category of least developed countries (LDCs) and had a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) estimated at $453 in 1990. From 1975, the date of independence, the country applied the model of a centralized state economy. It was not until 1987 that the Government began a process of far-reaching structural reforms at the political and institutional levels and of economic reorganization along liberal lines with a view to overcoming the country's development constraints.

2. The main structural constraints are: (a) The small size of the country, its geographical isolation and the low purchasing power of the population, which limit the growth of the domestic market and of domestic supply; (b) dependence on outside sources in order to meet food needs, and for essential products and financing; (c) dependence on a single crop, cocoa (86 per cent of export earnings); (d) limited development of the private sector and of entrepreneurial initiative among farmers, after so many years of State management of enterprises; and (e) limited development of human resources, particularly at the technical and managerial levels.

3. The drop in cocoa prices on international markets and the decrease in the production capacity of cocoa (a decline in gross production from about 11,600 tons in 1973 to 3,000 tons at present) have had an adverse impact on the country's macroeconomic balance, and have led to a marked impoverishment of the population in general and of agricultural workers in particular. Women, who constitute 38 per cent of the workforce in agricultural enterprises, have been particularly seriously affected. Per capita GDP continued to decline by an average of 2 per cent a year over the period 1986-1990. Despite two phases of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) (1988-1990 and 1990-1992), the balance of payments is structurally in deficit and the trade deficit rose from 15 to 28 per cent of GDP between 1986 and 1990. The deterioration in the financial situation forced the Government to seek an increasing volume of loans, and external debt rose to $187 million (or 3.2 times GDP) in 1991. Debt servicing in recent years has amounted to 30 to 50 per cent of export earnings.

4. In the composite human development index (HDI) Sao Tome and Principe ranks fifteenth among the countries with low human development, and is in 112th place out of 160 countries. Life expectancy is 64 years, or more than the average in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa (51 years), and literacy rates are high compared with those of low-income countries as a whole. It is interesting to note that there is no difference in classification between per capita GDP and HDI. However, it is difficult to assess the real situation because of the lack of reliable data, and this makes it necessary to carry out

specific studies. The study on poverty initiated with UNDP support in April 1991 showed a steady increase in poverty from 1987 to 1990 in relation to demand for essential goods and use of basic services. Among other indicators, mention should be made of the decline in the net primary enrolment ratio, previously one of the highest in Africa (96 per cent), and a significant deterioration in the health and nutritional status of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. The nominal monthly wages of agricultural workers and public and other employees declined by 12 per cent and 15 per cent respectively during the period in question (or a total of 40 per cent and 48 per cent). The unemployment rate, estimated at 21 per cent in 1987, increased to 26 per cent in 1990.

B. National development objectives and strategies

5. Recent developments in the economy and social indicators call for vigorous action by the Government, supported by donors, so as to reverse the negative trends in the country's socio-economic development process. The Government's development strategy is based on the progressive disengagement of the State and the promotion of national development and of the momentum to support the country's social and economic growth. Only action of this nature can ensure the success of efforts undertaken to improve living conditions and gradually eradicate poverty.

6. At the political level, democratization began in March 1991 with the establishment of the first Government of the Second Republic. The national socio-economic development programme for 1991-1994, approved on 10 May 1991 by the National Assembly and revised in June 1992, is characterized by liberal policies and the continuation of adjustment efforts to remedy past inadequacies and take into account the social costs of social change. The objectives of the programme are food security, an increase in exports, substitution of imports and an increase in production and economic growth. The Government is therefore according priority to the following activities: (a) growth and diversification of agricultural production; (b) increased output of agro-industrial products and of intermediate goods and services; (c) privatization of the economy and promotion of private investment; (d) rehabilitation and development of economic infrastructures to support the growth of production sectors; and (e) human resources development.

7. To this end, the Government recently initiated the restructuring process, involving: (a) land reform; (b) administrative reform; and (c) the establishment of a Centre for the Social Dimension of Development, which has the strategic objective of coherently incorporating the dimension of adjustment into the national poverty alleviation programme.

8. The public investment programme (PIP) of about $75 million for the period 1992-1994 envisages internal financing of $7.5 million. The average annual growth rate is 2.5 per cent, which represents a per capita development of 0.6 per cent.

II. EXTERNAL COOPERATION

A. Role of external cooperation

9. Total aid to the Government of Sao Tome and Principe amounted to $68.6 million in 1990. Five sectors absorb about 87.5 per cent of the assistance: the economy, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, transportation, and human resources development and strengthening of the administration and management of development.

10. Technical cooperation accounts for 36.6 per cent of resources, 9.7 per cent of which are allocated to technical cooperation linked with investment projects and 19.8 per cent to investment projects as such. Food aid constitutes 13.8 per cent, while assistance to the programme, budget and balance of payments is estimated at 12.9 per cent. At the bilateral level, the Governments of France and Portugal, which provide 13.1 per cent and 21.5 per cent of the assistance respectively, are the largest donors, followed by the Governments of Germany, Italy, Japan and Sweden, with a total of $4 million.

11. United Nations agencies, with 19.6 per cent, have concentrated their technical cooperation primarily in the sectors of human resources development (28.8 per cent); agriculture, forestry and fisheries (23.7 per cent); health (12.4 per cent); administration of development (11.8 per cent) and economic management (10.8 per cent). The increasing presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been reflected by an increase in their contribution, bringing to 4 per cent the total assistance provided by NGOs to Sao Tome and Principe in 1990.

B. Aid coordination arrangements

12. In view of the level of per capita aid to Sao Tome and Principe, which is one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa and a clear indication of the support provided by the international community, coordination is a vital instrument for effective management.

13. On a proposal from UNDP, new initiatives have been taken to strengthen coordination within the Government, namely: (a) the establishment of multisectoral teams for monitoring the structural adjustment programme and rural development, to act as a framework for poverty alleviation measures; (b) the institutionalization within the Prime Minister's Cabinet of the Interministerial Committee on Coordination and Action, which has been enlarged to include the participation of the coordinator of the United Nations system, the European Economic Community (EEC), other donors and NGOs. This new structure will make it possible for coordination to take place upstream, when programmes are being drawn up.

14. In order to improve the strategic dialogue with all donor countries, the Government has made use of the round-table conference mechanism supported by

UNDP. In the period 1989-1992, two round tables were held in order to launch global development strategies, mobilize resources and deal with the question of external debt. Downstream, six sectoral consultations of donors were held for the priority sectors of water, energy, health, education, infrastructure and rural development. The National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes (NATCAP) process began with the establishment of a database, and will continue during the fourth programme with the drawing up of an outline for technical cooperation policy designed to provide more effective guidelines and include technical cooperation in national planning instruments. The contribution of all donors, particularly UNDP, will be crucial to the success of the NATCAP process.

III. THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

A. Assessment of ongoing country programme

15. The third country programme (1987-1991), which coincided with the effective launch of the first phase of the structural adjustment programme in 1987, was extended by one year at the Government's request. The main thrust of the third programme was geared towards the priority sectors in the country and focused on: (a) strengthening the piloting capacity of the State; (b) broadening the production base in agriculture; (c) combating the country's isolation; and (d) promoting the private sector, together with horizontal measures including grass-roots participation in development, promotion of local NGOs and integration of women in the economy.

16. The annual review undertaken in June 1991 revealed a satisfactory rate of delivery of the country programme (75 per cent), despite the fact that all political and administrative staff were concentrating on the first pluralist elections to be held in the country. The impact of the programme has enabled the Government, with the support of UNDP, to consolidate the development of effective aid coordination mechanisms both within the United Nations system, through closer programme convergence, and between the Government and its various development partners, notably through the round-table process.

17. With regard to economic planning and management, UNDP assistance has helped improve the preparation of the indicators essential for macroeconomic management, such as the establishment of a statistical database, the preparation of national accounts and the introduction of a new budget methodology consistent with the structural adjustment programme.

18. With regard to the integration of women in the economy, a case study and a support mission have been undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to ensure greater involvement of women in the development and implementation of sectoral strategies and to improve programme design.

19. With regard to the successful assimilation and viability of the country programme, the most important lessons to be drawn are as follows:

(a) Technical cooperation has hitherto been ill-suited to the country's needs. The mobility of national officials has restricted the transfer of knowledge, as well as the ability to assimilate and make use of tools for the design and implementation of programmes. Consequently, the fourth country programme should make use of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and senior consultants only for specifically designated tasks;

(b) The productivity of national staff is poor as a result of low salaries and restricted career prospects within the civil service. To remedy these problems, provision was made as part of the NATCAP studies to introduce an incentive scheme based on staff performance, together with measures to ensure that recipients of overseas fellowships return to the country.

B. Proposals for UNDP cooperation

1. Preparatory process

20. The general outlines of the fourth country programme began to take shape during the various reviews undertaken as part of the third country programme, specifically the mid-term review in 1989, the two annual reviews in 1990 and 1991, and the various consultations and meetings held with UNDP and other donors. The operational studies undertaken in the priority areas identified in Governing Council decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990 made it possible to pinpoint the relevance of those areas to the sociocultural needs and realities of the country. The studies dealt with the poverty line, the situation of women in Sao Tome and Principe, the environment, the informal sector and appropriate technology, as well as local NGOs and participatory development.

21. The consultations between the Government, United Nations agencies and NGOs, held in July 1991 with substantial support from UNDP, made it possible to secure the support of all participants for the recommendation contained in General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989, encouraging coordination of the activities of the United Nations system in the field, as well as the programme approach, the promotion of national execution, and the gradual assimilation of these new dimensions to official development assistance (ODA).

22. At the same time, the round-table process, sectoral consultations, the collection of NATCAP data, the outcome of the two planning missions dealing with food crops and economic management, the process of revising the socio-economic development programme (1991-1994), the preparation of a third phase of the structural adjustment programme and, in particular, the advisory note by UNDP, all contributed to the establishment of a fruitful dialogue between the Government, the other partners and UNDP on the sectors and programmes where action was needed, and on the implementation strategies adopted.

23. Lastly, a drafting and monitoring committee for the fourth country programme has been set up under the chairmanship of the Government, consisting of technical staff from the ministries concerned. The country programme has

also been submitted and has been favourably received by the Council of Ministers.

2. Strategy for UNDP cooperation

24. The Government of Sao Tome and Principe has declared its readiness to pursue a cooperation strategy based on the comparative advantages of UNDP cooperation. Indeed, by virtue of its neutrality and flexibility, UNDP support remains the most appropriate means for the Government to identify reference frameworks for development and long-term strategies, as well as for the strengthening of national institutional capacity. As the recognized leader in the field of coordination, UNDP plays a special role as a partner of the Government in mobilizing additional resources and coordinating programmes.

25. In accordance with the mandate of UNDP, the UNDP strategy for cooperation with the Government will place emphasis not only on securing the support of all participants in international cooperation for the promotion of human development and the efforts to combat poverty, which form the spearhead of the country's new economic and social policy, but will also be based on an approach involving both the participation and responsibility of the beneficiaries. Close coordination will be sought with multilateral and bilateral donors and NGOs, within the framework of the programme approach.

26. UNDP will continue to be an influential partner assisting the Government in its efforts to open up the country, notably through negotiations on accession to the Central African Customs and Economic Union, the initiatives by PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African countries) and the regional programmes for logistical support and promotion of NGOs. A study on subregional integration by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) will be carried out in early 1993 as part of the TSS-1 programme (Technical Support Services at the programme level).

3. Proposed UNDP cooperation in selected areas of concentration

27. Two areas of concentration are being selected for the fourth programme: (a) poverty alleviation through rural development, which will account for approximately 47 per cent of the indicative planning figure (IPF); and (b) management of the economy and development, which will account for 20 per cent of the IPF.

Poverty alleviation through rural development

28. Development objectives and problems. On the basis of the study on poverty and the social impact of adjustment carried out with UNDP support, the poverty index rose from 30 to 40 per cent of the overall population between 1987 and 1990. Among the groups most affected are employees of large State-owned cocoa plantations, 38 per cent of whom are women. In order to

reverse this negative trend and to combat poverty, the Government has adopted a programme of parcelling out large agricultural operations and distributing the land, giving priority to laid-off agricultural workers. The way is thus paved, at the level of the family, for the development of a new category of small and medium-sized private agricultural enterprises.

29. It must be noted, however, that the plantations that will benefit from this distribution of land are in a dilapidated condition. Housing is rudimentary and insalubrious, social infrastructure is lacking, the road system is impassable during much of the year, and there is a lack of hygiene related to a complete deterioration of systems for drinking water supply and sanitation. A recent UNDP study indicates that the small-business and manual-crafts sector relies on only the most basic equipment, if any, and is run and developed especially by women. Basically, the activities concerned involve the processing of food products intended for household consumption, a portion of which can, however, be sold in rural markets. Therefore, in order to foster and accelerate the process of poverty alleviation in rural areas, a priority in rural decentralization is the institution of a support programme for small businesses and rural cottage industries to enable the promotion of long-term employment and income, particularly for single women heading households.

30. There was consensus among donors as a whole in support of this programme. In this context, in accordance with the modalities of the programme approach, it is essential to define a coherent strategic and operational framework and a co sequent technical and social policy, and to establish quickly an institutional framework and basic coordination allowing the sustainable development of the land. Approximately 20,000 hectares will be distributed initially and 8,000 people will be directly involved in the programme, which will have a major impact on the country as a whole.

31. The Government's programme to alleviate poverty through rural development consists of the following elements:

(a) Land distribution programme;

(b) Mobilization of the people through participatory development;

(c) Creation of incentives to promote rural communities, rural loans and housing, rural extension activities, research and development, and marketing;

(d) Agricultural diversification (food crops, market gardening, fruit, spices);

(e) Rehabilitation of social and economic infrastructure (rural roads, improvements and equipment, alternative energy, appropriate agricultural technology);

(f) Establishment of small industries in order to create jobs; and

(g) Institutional strengthening.

32. Proposed UNDP cooperation. UNDP assistance, around 47 per cent of the available IPF, will be allocated in part to coordination of the programme as a whole, and to operational follow-up to the land distribution programme. In particular, it will aim at poverty alleviation through the development of food crops (maize, beans and rice), promotion of entrepreneurship in agriculture and manual crafts and marketing, especially by women, of food crops (with the support of UNIFEM). The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Office (ILO) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) will participate in this aspect of the programme in order to promote the use of local materials for rural housing and labour-intensive public works. The programme will play a major role in fostering cooperative associations, setting up small projects and granting rural loans. The contribution of the World Food Programme (WFP) through the use of counterpart funds also will be important in accordance with the "food-for-work" formula for development of social infrastructure. The various programme components will take the environment into account through UNDP activities to raise awareness, to educate, and to promote improved stoves.

33. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNDP are collaborating in the integration of maternal and child health, family planning, nutritional monitoring and efforts to control acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) into primary health care services. UNICEF, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and WHO will also provide support in the areas of drinking water supply and sanitation.

34. Through such specialization and through careful monitoring as this new category of food-producing entrepreneurs is formed, UNDP cooperation will have much greater impact on the most vulnerable groups under this programme by combating poverty and by helping those groups to establish their independence from intervention by public authorities and donors.

35. The indicators of success in this programme of poverty alleviation in the priority areas of intervention as defined by the Government are:

(a) Effective and continuing development of distributed land;

(b) A medium-term increase in food production;

(c) Improved working and living conditions for the new "agricultural entrepreneurs"; and

(d) Direct support to women landowners.

36. Complementary assistance. Regarding rural loans, the Fund for Aid and Cooperation (FAC) will conduct a study on the establishment of a permanent agricultural credit institution. The Central Fund for Economic Cooperation (CFEC) wishes to become involved in that area, and UNCDF will strengthen its experience in that field, already begun in 1992. Rural extension and research will receive assistance from, among others, FAC, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), many NGOs, and the

Governments of France, Italy, Portugal and the United States. FAC and the EEC have shown an interest in agricultural diversification and the development of market gardening and of fruit and copra production (coconut palm). FAC will become involved in rural housing, and IFAD and the Government of Japan in small-scale fishing.

Programme of support for economic and development management

37. Development objectives and problems. Among the principal measures taken by the Government for the purpose of macroeconomic management, the third phase of the structural adjustment programme (1992-1994) must be mentioned. Approved in May 1992, it covers the preparation of administrative reform, renegotiation of external debt, restructuring of the banking sector and promotion of the private sector. Therefore, the Government's twofold objective for the fourth country programme is to put into effect measures for adjustment and economic recovery, in accordance with the timetable dictated by the changing macroeconomic environment, while strengthening its own command of programme design and management techniques. It will also pay greater attention to the social impact of adjustment. To achieve this, significant assistance is necessary in terms of advice on strategy, availability of adjusted indicators, and coordination of assistance and programmes, management methodologies and training/retraining.

38. Proposed UNDP cooperation. UNDP support will therefore be based on its comparative advantage as the main provider of independent technical cooperation, so as to strengthen the Government's capacity to formulate, negotiate and manage the adjustment process and the overall reform and to measure their social impact.

39. As part of the amount corresponding to 20 per cent of the IPF, UNDP assistance will be focused on strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance. In particular, UNDP will support basic statistics, national accounts, budgetary data and debt and trade-balance management through the SYDONIA project. A close link will be maintained with the monitoring of social indicators and the poverty index. Training and motivation of officials and coordination of participants in the programme will represent a large part of UNDP support based on the National Technical Cooperation Assessments and Programmes (NATCAP) process.

40. As a funding source additional and complementary to the IPF, Special Programme Resources (SPRs) will be tapped to provide support for assistance coordination mechanisms, such as the round-table and sectoral-consultation process. Support from the Management Development Programme will be used to strengthen the National Centre for Administrative Reform and the Interministerial Committee on Coordination and Action, and to deal with the strategic issue of the status of civil servants.

41. Furthermore, development constraints affecting Sao Tome and Principe will be the subject of a long-term study to be carried out with the support of the UNDP regional programme.

42. The criteria for successful UNDP support for this programme will be:

(a) A higher number of qualified officials at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance;

(b) The enhancement of government officials' analytical and economic management capabilities and the consequent decrease in the need for expert assistance, especially in the long term;

(c) The production of more detailed economic and social indicators, making it possible to implement a more appropriate economic and social policy;

(d) A more rational management of the State's financial resources.

43. Complementary assistance. The programme of support for economic and development management will also receive special complementary assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in respect of the follow-up to the third phase of the structural adjustment programme, and from the African Development Bank (ADB) in respect of the social dimension of adjustment. ADB will also support the preparation of and follow-up to the Public Sector Investment Programme and the financial analysis of projects. The European Community and the French Government will provide technical support to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance. As part of its cooperation, the French Government will also continue to provide, through co-financing with UNDP, assistance to SYDONIA and support to the Ministry of Justice, Labour and Territorial Administration through the "Observation post for the administrative reform". The Swedish Government will continue to assist in the training of officials responsible for implementing the administrative reform.

Support for the execution of the fourth country programme

44. In order to promote the development of genuine national capacity for programme execution, the Government and UNDP agreed to use 8 per cent of the IPF to strengthen support mechanisms; this will promote and provide the necessary flexibility for consultations, training and logistical support, with a view to programme management by the national authorities.

45. As part of this support project, a programme management unit will be established within the State Secretariat for Cooperation and Development. Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), which was launched during the previous cycle, is fully complementary to the remainder of the programme.

C. Assistance outside main country programme areas

46. Programmed assistance is entirely focused on the three areas of concentration. An amount corresponding to 25 per cent of the IPF has been set aside as an unprogrammed reserve.

D. Implementation and management arrangements

47. Owing to the interdependence of programme components and participants in the implementation of the fourth country programme on the basis of the programme approach, particularly where poverty alleviation through rural development is concerned, it will be necessary not only to organize, strengthen and revitalize grass-roots organizations, but also to take into account the socio-political environment. An effort will also be made to support decentralized decision-making and programme execution and management at the local level, with genuine participation by target groups.

48. With regard to technical cooperation and programme management, UNDP will emphasize national capacity-building and training, thus laying the groundwork for its gradual replacement. To that end, it will call upon the United Nations specialized agencies, which still have an important role to play in providing advice and expert assistance in the implementation of the programme. At the same time, priority will be given to mechanisms better suited to the national context, such as those of the United Nations (United Nations Volunteers (UNV), technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), regional programmes), and to the use of local and international NGOs and national private institutions.

49. With regard to follow-up and evaluation procedures, UNDP has provided technical resources to facilitate the implementation of the general plan of assessment of the fourth country programme (annual and mid-term reviews). The Government has established the Centre for the Social Dimension of Development, which is also expected to carry out the periodic studies required for the monitoring of changes with respect to the poverty line and the national impact of the fourth country programme.

Annex I

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

I. ESTIMATED RESOURCES (IPF + cost-sharing) TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR PROGRAMMING

	(Thousands of dollars)	
Carry-over from fourth cycle IPF	(199)	
Fifth cycle IPF	4 872	
1992 requirements	(800)	
Subtotal IPF (1993-1996)		3 873
Project cost-sharing (Government)	-	
Project cost-sharing (Third-party)	-	
Subtotal cost-sharing	-	
TOTAL		3 873

II. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES (IPF + cost-sharing) BY AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Area of concentration	Thousands of dollars			Percentage of total resources
	IPF	Cost-sharing	Total	
Poverty alleviation	2 130	-	2 130	55
Management and development	969	-	969	25
Execution support	387	-	387	10
Subtotal	3 486	-	3 486	
Unprogrammed reserve	387		387	10
TOTAL	3 873	-	3 873	100

III. COMPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER SOURCES USED IN UNDP AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

(Thousands of dollars)

A. UNDP-administered funds		
SPR a/	1 000	
UNCDF	4 500	
UNSO	-	
UNIFEM	400	
UNRFNRE	-	
UNFSTD	-	
Global Environment Facility (GEF) b/	100	
Subtotal		6 000
B. Other United Nations resources		
JCGP participating agencies:		
UNFPA	2 250	
UNICEF	4 500	
WFP	12 800	
IFAD	4 000	
Other United Nations agencies (non-UNDP financed)	2 000	
Subtotal		25 550
Total non-core and other United Nations resources		-
C. Non-United Nations resources		-
TOTAL		31 550

a/ Include only SPR-financed, country-specific commitments.

b/ Administered jointly with the World Bank.

Annex II

PROGRAMME MATRIX

Area of concentration	Development management	Environment and natural resource management	Management development	TCDC	Transfer and adaptation of technology	WID
I. RURAL DEVELOPMENT						
Institutional support	*	*	*			*
Land distribution	*	*	*			*
Food crops	*	*		*	*	*
Rural credit	*				*	*
Rural extension and training	*	*			*	*
Promotion of small- and medium-scale businesses	*	*	*	*	*	*
AIDS prevention				*		
II. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT						
Institutional strengthening	*		*			*
Macroeconomic development strategy	*		*		*	*
Aid coordination	*		*	*	*	*